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DESCRIPTION

OF THE

PANORAMA

OF THE

PALACE AND GARDENS

OF

VERSAILLES,

PAINTED BY MR. VANDERBLYN.

*The Original Sketches of which were taken on the
spot, by him, in the Autumn of 1815.*

Supposed time of day, from 4 to 5, P. M.

NEW-YORK

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1820.

A SKETCH
OF THE
City, Palace and Gardens
OF
VERSAILLES.

VERSAILLES is situated on rising ground and champaign country, about 12 miles south-west of Paris. It was purchased by Louis 13th, and occupied by him as an occasional summer retreat, and for the pleasures of the chase; but the village continued small, and the mansion nothing more than a plain country house, until the extravagance and ambition of Louis 14th converted it into a magnificent royal residence, worthy of the Augustan age of France. He was said to have been impelled to this step, to avoid being continually reminded of his mortality, by the sight of the cathedral of St. Denis, the royal cemetery, which is seen from the palace of St. Germain, where he then resided. The palace was begun in the year 1661, under the direction of the famous Mansard. The gardens were chiefly arranged by Le Notre. In 1762, after immense expenditures, it vied with the most splendid palaces of Europe, and became the permanent residence of the French court. From that time it was continually receiving, under the Bourbon dynasty, large additions, till it has acquired a splendor and extent unrivalled by the PALACE of any country. The town, from a small village, on the arrival of the court, soon became a city containing twenty-eight thousand inhabitants, with many superb edifices and extensive public institutions. The city and gardens are chiefly supplied with water from the Seine at Marly, which is 3 miles distant, by means of a vast machinery,

which raises it 500 feet above the level of the river. This machinery is said to have cost, in the first instance, eight millions of livres; since which time it has been much enlarged.

Versailles continued to be the residence of the court up to the revolution; when the populace, viewing it as one of the causes of their misery, and an emblem of their former degradation, would have demolished the whole had it not been for the subtilty of an artist, who persuaded them to turn it to economical purposes. Accordingly, the garden was planted with apple trees, and its elegant parterres converted into potatoe-patches. During this time the palace was occupied as an arsenal, museum and hospital, until the emperor restored it to its former destination and beauty, although he never inhabited it. Since the re-establishment of the Bourbon family, the whole has undergone a thorough repair, with the intention, it is said, of removing the court there; so that, in a short time, we may expect to see Versailles reclaim its former grandeur and importance.

The palace is approached in front by three great roads or avenues. The middle one, which is 25 toises in breadth, leads from Paris; one from St. Cloud, and one from Seau. They converge and terminate in a kind of parade ground, called the royal square. The stables are on the right and left of the grand avenue, forming two crescents so regular and beautiful, that few royal palaces exceed them. From this place the chateau or palace appears like a magnificent theatre; and you ascend in going to it. The outer gate is of wrought iron gilt, and about twelve feet high; it is terminated by two lanterns, surmounted by two groups of figures; the one carved by Marsy, and the other by Girardon. A second gate adorned with groups, separates the two court yards. The two large piles of buildings belonging to the wings, each terminated by a pavilion, are designed for the officers of the kitchen. After that you see the fore-front and the wings of the old palace; the front has a balcony, supported by eight marble columns; there are two ranges of apartments that join the two palaces.

The new palace is a range of magnificent apartments, which, together with its wings, forms a front of more than eighteen hundred feet. It is built so as to front the garden, and it is on this side that Versailles makes the finest appearance. The great marble staircase surpasses any thing of the kind which antiquity can boast. The fresco paintings were done by Le Brun, and the bust of Louis 14th was carved by the famous Croisevox. This is the entrance into the grand apartments. The chapel belonging to the palace is an exceeding fine piece of architecture, built of yellow free-stone, in the Corinthian order, 132 feet long, 72 broad and 84 high. On the top there is a fine balustrade, with twenty-eight statues. Nothing can be more beautiful or richer than the internal embellishments of this chapel. The great altar is of the finest marble.—The sacristy is very neat. You ascend to the galleries by two stair-cases, with iron rails richly gilt. The king's gallery faces the great altar, over the great door, and is thirteen feet and a half wide. The queen's gallery is on the right; and the gallery which runs round the chapel, is nine feet wide, supported by sixteen pilasters, of the Corinthian order. The balustrade is very rich and elegant. The ceiling is elegantly painted by eminent hands. The gardens abound with master pieces of every kind. The orangery is one of the fairest pieces of Tuscan architecture to be seen at Versailles: it is divided into three galleries; the middle one 160 feet by 15, and the lateral ones each 120 by 15. The eight groups of bronze in the parterre of water, and which represent the eight rivers of France, are by the two Kellers. The group of marble in the basin of Latona, is by Marsy. The flower garden is by Le Notre, and the parterre of the orangery by Quintinie. The equestrian statue at the head of the Swiss piece, or basin, on the other side of the orangery, was made by Bernini, for Louis 14th; but not finding the work so complete as he could wish, he changed the features and made a Curtius of it. The figure of autumn in the basin of Bacchus, is by Marsy, and the

vase of Saturn by Girardon. The colonnade is a peristyle of thirty-two columns, supported by as many pilasters, in the Ionic order. The roofs are of white marble, embellished with beautiful basso-relievos; in the middle is a beautiful group of marble, by Girardon, representing the rape of Proserpine. The group of metal in the large basin of Apollo, is by Tuby, and reckoned one of his best pieces. The Enceladus is a very fine group, set up in an octagon basin: from the mouth of this giant, oppressed by the weight of mountains, flows a jet d'eau, or spout of water, that rises seventy-eight feet high. Tuby made the basin of Flora, and Renaudon that of Ceres. Of the three excellent groups in the baths of Apollo, Girardon made the middle one, and Marsy and Guerin the other two. The fountain of the pyramid is executed in bronze by Girardon: Tuby and Le Hongre made the two basins below; the vases were carved at Rome. The cascade of the canal where the nymphs are bathing, is a square, where several masks seem to spout out water for their use. This work is by Girardon; and the rivers were executed by Le Hongre and Le Gros. The dragon of the fountain that bears that name is by Marsy; the group of the basin of Neptune is by Gendi, a disciple of Algardi. The piece of water called the grand canal, is 4300 feet long, and 192 broad; it has a traverse or cross current of 3000 feet, with the same breadth, which on the one side leads to the menagery, and on the other to Trianon.

The menagery is a small palace built by Mansart. The two apartments for winter and summer, are adorned with excellent paintings. The aviary is the finest in all France, and the best stocked. Several apartments in this palace are appropriated for the breeding of animals of all kinds, from the most common to the rarest.

From the menagery there are several alleys that lead to the royal and magnificent abbey of St. Cyr.—It is situated in the park, about three miles from the palace, and was founded by Louis 14th, for the educa-

tion of two hundred and fifty young ladies. The number of nuns was forty. The king reserved the nomination of the young ladies to himself. To obtain admission, they had to prove four degrees of nobility on the father's side. No girl entered under seven years of age, nor stayed there after the age of twenty. On leaving, they had either a thousand crowns in money, or one of those places the king had the disposal of in several convents. The buildings are extremely fine. The architect was Mansart, who finished it in 1686.

Trianon was built after the design of T. H. Mansart. This little palace may be looked upon as a kind of summer-house to the gardens of Versailles. It is built in an excellent taste, and is moreover embellished by the richest decorations. The front is 334 feet in length, and has two returning wings, terminated by two pavilions.

Small Trianon, which in the Panorama, is seen at a distance surrounded by poplars, is celebrated for its botanical collections. It was here that Jussieu formed his natural families of plants.

The distant hill and wood beyond Trianon, is the forest of Marly.

KEY
TO THE PANORAMA
OF THE
GARDEN OF VERSAILLES.

No. 1.

The palace. The facade fronting the garden is divided into three pavilions, decorated with Ionic columns and pilasters, surmounted with emblematical figures of the Arts, Seasons and Months. At the extremities of the middle pavilion are placed two bronzes, by Kellers, representing Bacchus and Apollo. Behind this pavilion is seen the gilded roof of the chapel.—Over the left extremity of the building, the roof of the opera house, forming the right wing of the palace: the upper part of it contains an immense reservoir of water, which supplies the elevated parts of the garden.

No. 2.

A part of the city of Versailles, the most of which is concealed by the palace.

No. 3.

The plot in front of the palace is called the *parterre d'eau*. It contains two basins with water-spouts, ornamented with figures in bronze, emblematical of the eight rivers of France, the nymphs, naiads, genii and cupids.

No. 4.

The southern *parterre* contains two basins with water-spouts. Beyond this is the stone balustrade bordering the grand terrace: from the extremities of which descend two stair-cases of one hundred and three steps each, leading to the orangery, and from the

garden into the town. Beyond the terrace is seen the forest of Satori; between which and the orangery, extends a beautiful sheet of water, 500 feet by 150, called *piece des Swisses*. This sheet of water, as well as the orangery and great stair leading down to it, cannot be seen from here.

No. 5.

On the right of the balustrade is seen a thick grove, which encloses the *Salle de Bal* placed in the centre, surrounded by cascades and vases.

List of Statues before this Grove.

The two figures facing the balustrade, represent Water and Fire, by Le Gros and Magnier.

The front, 1. Daybreak—Marsy.

2. Lyric Poetry—Tuby.

3. Fire—Dozier.

4. Tiridates, king of Parthia—Andre.

5. Venus Callypiga.

6. Silenus with the infant Bacchus—Masier.

7. Antinous—Le Gros.

8. Mercury, from the antique—Melo.

9. Urania—Carlier.

10. Apollo—Mazeline.

11. Circe (a Hermes)—Magnier.

In front of the last figure—the dying Gladiator. Some of these are after the designs of Le Brun.

No. 6.

A Quincunx of chesnut and linden trees decorated with eight Hermes, from the designs of Poussin. In the distance is seen the roof of the *chateau de St. Cyr*, once the residence of *Mad. de Maintenon*.

No. 7.

A thick grove extending on the left of the great alley to the basin of Apollo. It is intersected by avenues, and contains a circular colonnade in marble, with a group of statues in the centre. This grove hides

from the view the left arm of the great canal. On the upper angle is an original statue, by Puget, representing Milo Crotoniates. To the left, Castor and Pollux, from the antique, by Croisevox.

No. 8.

The plot of grass in the middle of the great alley is called the tapis vert. Beyond it is seen the great basin of Apollo, containing a large group, representing Apollo on his chariot, drawn by four coursers, and surrounded by dolphins and tritons; all in bronze, by Tuby, after the designs of Le Brun.

No. 9.

Beyond the basin of Apollo is the great canal, with two arms; on the extremity of the left one is situated the menagery, and on that of the right, Trianon.

No. 10.

The grove and quincunx on the right of the alley is intersected by avenues, and contains two basins, with several statues. Beyond the grove, in the distance is seen the village of St. Non. Further to the right, surrounded by poplars, is Petite Trianon. The group on the upper angle of this grove, represents Perseus releasing Andromeda from the rock:—the group to the right is Poetus and Arria: the next are four Hermes—1st. representing Hercules with his club and holding the golden apple—2d. Bacchus with a tambourine—3d. A Faun—4th. Diogenes—and a little in front of them is a reclining figure of the Nymph a la Coquille.

No. 11.

The extensive grove on the right encloses the famous baths and grotto of Apollo. On the upper angle of this grove, and facing the palace, are seen two statues: the first represents Evening, in the figure of Diana, by Desjardins; the other, of which only one half is seen, represents Mid-day, in the figure of Venus, by Marsy.

Range of Statues in front on descending.

1. Air with the eagle and camelion at her feet, by Le Hongre.
2. Melancholy, with a bandage over her mouth, holding a purse and book in either hand.
3. Antinous, from the antique, by La Croix.
4. Tigranes. from the antique.
5. A young Faun, from the antique.
6. Bacchus, from the antique.
7. Faustina, in the figure of Ceres.
8. Emperor Commodus, in the figure of Hercules.
9. Urania.
10. Ganymedes.
11. Ceres (a Hermes) crowned with flowers.

No. 12.

A wood extending from the last mentioned grove to the palace. It hides from the spectator the great basin and water works of Neptune.

No. 13.

In front, before the great alley, is the basin of Latona. It contains a beautiful group in marble, by Marsy. A little more remote are two smaller basins. with a jet d'eau.

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DESCRIPTION
Of the City, Palace and Gardens of
VERSAILLES,
NOW EXHIBITING, AT THE NEW-YORK ROTUNDA,
CORNER OF CHAMBER AND CROSS-STREET.

1. The Palace. The Facade fronting the Garden is divided into three pavilions
2. A part of the City of Versailles, most of which is concealed by the Palace.
3. The Plot in front of the Palace, called the Parterre d'Eau.
4. The Southern Parterre, containing two basins with water-spouts.
5. Thick Grove, which encloses the Salle de Bal, surrounded by cascades & vases
6. A Quincunx of Chestnut and linden trees decorated with eight Hermes.
7. A thick Grove, extending on the left of the great alley to the Basin of Apollo.
8. A Plot of Grass in the middle of the great alley, called the Tapis Vert.
9. The Great Canal, beyond the Basin of Apollo.
10. The Grove and Quincunx on the right of the alley.
11. The extensive Grove on the right encloses the famous Baths and Grotto of Apollo.
12. A Wood extending from the last mentioned Grove to the Palace.
13. The Basin of Latona. It contains a beautiful Group in marble, and has a smaller Basin on each side.

List of Statues
Before the Grove No. 5.

The two figures facing the balustrade represent Water and Fire, by Le Gros and Magnier.

1. Day-break—Marsy.
 2. Lyric Poetry—Tuby.
 3. Fire—Dozier.
 4. Tiridates, king of Parthia—Andre.
 5. Venus Callipyga.
 6. Silenus with the infant Iacchus.—Masier.
 7. Antinous—Le Gros.
 8. Mercury, from the antique—Melo.
 9. Urania—Carlier.
 10. Apollo—Mazeline.
 11. Ceres [a Hermes]—Magnier.
- In front of the last figure, the dying Gladiator. The most of these after the designs of Le Brun.

Range of Statues
IN FRONT ON DESCENDING.

1. Air, with the Eagle and Camelion at her feet, by Le Hongre.
2. Melancholy with a bandage over her mouth, holding a purse and book in either hand.
3. Antinous, from the antique by La Croix.
4. Tigranis, from the antique.
5. A young Faun, from the antique.
6. Bacchus, from the antique.
7. Faustina, in the figure of Ceres.
8. Emperor Commodus, in the figure of Hercules.
9. Urania.
10. Ganymedes.
11. Ceres [a Hermes] crowned with flowers.

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1820.

Louis 18 is seen in the centre window

In this Group of Officers is seen the Emperor Alexander in green coat & white pantaloons. In his right is the dog of Omphale, on his blue coat & green pantaloons in the blue coat & green pantaloons.

The hedges which enclose the groves are made of the horn-beam bush, cut to a straight surface. The green clumps cut in the shape of Cornucopias are the open tree cut to that form

These distant woods are the forest of Marly

These distant woods are the forest of Marly

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Description of the panorama of the palac